

Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler

TODAY

OUR RECORD OF PROPHECY

WHEN TEMPTATION ASSAILS

THE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY

THE CHRISTIAN'S BOW OF PROMISE

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

JUST THE SAME TODAY

Megiddo Message

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Kenneth E. Flowerday, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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Charleston, Miss.

E. Simmons

[The deceased is also survived by a sister and very earnest reader, Ruby M. Simmons of St. Louis, Mo.]

We, of the Megiddo Mission, express our sincere sympathy on so sad an occasion. Editor]

Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler

THE THEME for our sermon today is prompted by Jesus' answer to the rich young ruler who accosted Him with the question, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" The young man had listened to Jesus' preaching and was somewhat impressed by it. It had a freshness, it sounded practical, it possessed a vitality that was totally lacking in the teaching of the rabbis. It might be worth looking into. But the young man's attitude soon changed. He didn't want to be right with God or inherit eternal life as badly as he had thought. He lacked depth. As an insect in its cocoon he was snug and self-satisfied. But like some terrible moral huntsman, Jesus was persistently digging mankind out of their snug burrows bringing their deep hidden sins to light. Hence when Jesus answered, "Keep the commandments," and enumerated them, the young man replied casually, and almost automatically, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"

Beginning at verses 16, 17 of Matthew 19, we read: "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

It seems inconsistent with the facts in the case that Jesus should have asked "Why callest thou me good?" if by that question He meant that He personally was not good. We know from the record of Jesus' life that He *was* good. He said of Himself: "The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." And again in His intimate conversation with His disciples after the Last Supper, He said, in praying to His Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). When on the mount of the transfiguration the voice spake: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Jesus having obeyed the commandments had become good in God's sight. It would have been untrue for Him to have said: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." The thought has been advanced that Jesus may have referred to the Father as the sole embodiment of good, as the fountain of all goodness, and in this respect it could be said that He only is good. Indeed, that is the proper concept, and the newer translations fully uphold this approach.

Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott translates those words: "Why askest thou me concerning the good? one is the good. If thou wishest to enter into the life, keep strictly the commandments." And most of the newer versions carry the same idea. "Why dost thou come to me to ask of goodness? God is good, and he only" (Knox Translation). "Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments" (R. S. V.).

Jesus never said, "Why callest thou me good?" but: Why do you ask me concerning the good? Now what did Jesus infer was good? His next utterance reveals His

meaning, "If you wish to enter into life, keep strictly the commandments." That is the goodness Jesus stressed in all His public utterances. "If thou wouldst enter into life, keep diligently the commandments." That is the good thing, that is the good way, that is the plan of action that will lead to life and glory. And it is the same sentiment as Jesus voiced in John 15:3, only worded a little differently, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." That is the way to become good. You must get yourself clean to become good.

Isaiah is unambiguous and clear on how to get clean, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well" (Isa. 1:16, 17). That is the only way to become good, by obedience to the words of the apostles, prophets and Jesus. Jesus said again, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). Here Jesus projects the reward for goodness: "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." If my words abide in you, and you keep diligently the commandments, you shall enter into life. And again in v. 10 Jesus stresses further the need for goodness, and pictures its abundant rewards. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." He said, that is the reason why my Father loves me, and why I am good, because I keep His commandments.

The Young Man's Reaction

Now let us study the young man's reaction to Jesus' demand, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." "He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Then the young man answered, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" (vs. 18—20). No doubt all the commandments the young man had in mind were the Ten Commandments. Like the religious world today, if we stress that they must keep the commandments to be saved they think at once of the Ten Commandments. But that was only an outward form of the law, it did not deal with the thoughts and intents of the heart. Of course when Jesus said to him, "keep the commandments," He referred more especially to the commandments of the law of faith, the "royal law."

When Jesus enumerated to the young man the commandments to be kept to merit salvation he answered jauntily, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" What a self-righteous fellow he was! He would compare favorably with the Pharisee in Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the publican who thanked God that he was not like other men. The young man was self-confident. His attitude was, I am all right, there is nothing that I lack! It is not likely that he had ever murdered a man, or stolen, or committed adultery, however he had only maintained an outward form of

righteousness, had conformed to the demands of the Mosaic Law, but had never allowed the love of God to reach his inner life, or the law of God to influence the thoughts and intents of his heart. He did not take in the depth of the meaning of Jesus' words.

A Human Weakness

In Romans 2 Paul pictures the Jewish complex of smugness and self-confidence in words that are too plain to be misunderstood. "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law" (vs. 17—20). Yes, Paul is saying, you just have the outward form, you surrender to the Mosaic Law which controls the outer life only, leaving the inner life untouched. The Ten Commandments were only an outward form, they compared with the law of our land, obeying them would not bring salvation. The Ten Commandment Law civilized and made good citizens only; Divine Law purifies men and women—makes saints.

With the law of our land a man to be a murderer has to go out and commit the act, he has actually to take life, before the law will impose on him the death penalty. But to be a murderer in God's sight you need only to have the desire in your heart, the intent, the thought that you would take life if conditions were right. You are as guilty as if you committed the act if you only refrain for fear of the penalty. Of course, if you experienced the impulse, but would not yield to the temptation, because you realized it was sin, and stanching the guilty thought, then you gain a victory, and you are no murderer in God's sight. Drawing the line still tighter, John said, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15). Murder, in its deeper definition, takes in much more than murder under the Ten Commandments. And Jesus had taught the same in His first sermon: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. 5:21, 22).

Then let us consider "stealing." To take that which belongs to another is a common form of stealing, but it is not the only form. In Romans 2:21 Paul intimated there could be more than one kind of stealing. "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" Perhaps they were not stealing in the simplest sense of the word, yet they may in reality be stealing. All that was meant under the Law was the taking of physical property, but let us consider another type of stealing. Jeremiah 23:30 speaks of stealing away the word of God one from another. They "steal my words every one from his neighbor." That is the worst form of stealing. Which would we prefer, that someone steal away the little wealth we may have amassed during our life time, leaving us helplessly dependent in our declining years, or steal away our hope of eternal life by misleading us? Jesus spoke of this latter type of stealing when He said, "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but

climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). If you try to climb up in any other way than with the intent of keeping God's commandments from the heart, you are a thief and a robber.

And there are still other forms of the sin of stealing. If we try to steal away another's good name by circulating vicious stories about him with the hope of advancing our own prestige, we are practicing thievery. If we feign virtues which we do not possess, we are trying to steal that which does not belong to us, and any one of these evil practices will unfit us to enter into life.

There is a vast difference between the effectiveness of the two laws. Under the Mosaic or Ten Commandment Law, you had to take the article to be a thief, but under the Royal law, if you would take it if you had the opportunity, only you feared the law would get you—if you would refrain from taking it only because of the consequences, not because it was wrong—you are just as guilty as if you had taken it.

Then let us compare the two laws as they condemn the sin of adultery. "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?" (Rom. 2:22). If you would commit the act if you thought you could do it without detection, you are just as guilty before the Almighty as if you committed it. Jesus spoke directly about adultery in Matthew 5, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (vs. 27, 28).

That rich young ruler said to Jesus, "All these things have I kept from my youth up." How ignorant he was of the breadth and depth of Jesus' teaching! He thought he was all right by keeping the outward form only.

The Young Man's Real Weakness

When the young man said to Jesus, "All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?" he probably was not aware of the trap he was setting for himself. He was self-confident, and probably felt there was not much that he lacked, and that Jesus would be obliged to give him a clean "bill of health" as it were. How easily we can be deceived especially when evaluating our own conduct! Of course Jesus knew what his reaction would be for He "knew what was in man," hence He could know the thoughts and intents of his heart. Now He is going to put him to a test, so He said to him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Ah, Jesus touched him in the tender spot, he had great possessions. Our founder the Rev. L. T. Nichols once gave us a free translation of these words of Jesus' which seem to clarify what He was saying; "Bring that substance of thine under the yoke," that is, come into submission. He did not have to go and sell out all of his property literally speaking, but to be right he did have to sell out to the Lord.

We must not set our affections upon our earthly possessions, but bring all under the yoke of Christ, using all we have and are in His service.

Making God Our Friend

So when Jesus said to this young man, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor," He meant, sell out all to God, and use it in His service. Not that he literally

had to sell his property off, and give the proceeds away. Jesus gives directions on how to manage temporal wealth so as to use it to make God and Christ our friends. In Luke 16:9 we read, "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." There is a practical lesson for us in these words of Jesus: to use all we have in God's service that He may be our friend. If you are not faithful in the least how can you expect to be faithful in much, or qualify for greater responsibilities. Children should be taught never to take one solitary thing that does not belong to them. Little things lead to greater things, small acts of dishonesty to greater acts of dishonesty.

Then Jesus continues: "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (v. 11). If you have not been faithful in using this unrighteous mammon, or worldly wealth—it is called "unrighteous" because it has been used unrighteously—who will commit to your trust the true riches? "And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's who shall give you that which is your own?" It all belongs to the Lord, you see. That is the very lesson Jesus wanted to impress on the mind of this young man. If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? If we use our present possessions, that which is another man's, unlawfully, how could we be trusted with that which is our own, God's true riches!

All Belongs to God

King David realized that what he had was not his own. He had some terrible besetting sins, but he also had some noble characteristics that helped him overcome them. In I Chronicles, chapters 28 and 29, we have an account of the occasion when the King assembled Israel to gather together the wealth needed to build the house of the Lord. His son Solomon, actually built the temple.

Beginning with verse 12 of chapter 29 we read an excerpt from David's prayer of thanksgiving: "Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?" You see he was little in his own eyes then. "For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." When we give, we just give what belongs already to the Almighty. "For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding." Oh, in this life there is none abiding. "O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own." That was the right spirit, not like this young man that came to Jesus with the attitude "look at the wonderful things I have done!" No, says David, it is "all thine own," all comes from Thee. If the young man who came to Jesus had only maintained that attitude!

Going back to Matthew 19 we will see how the young

man took the gracious counsel of the Master, to bring all under the yoke. "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (v. 22). When he heard what Jesus said he went away sorrowful. When he asked what to do to gain eternal life and Jesus told him, he exhibited self-righteousness; he said, I have already done all that. I am righteous. But when he heard the command, Sell all out to the Lord, he went away sorrowful. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven" (v. 23). He laid down the principle there, and how true it is! A few who were rich have qualified for the kingdom, but as a rule possessing wealth puffs one up.

The Needle's Eye

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Matt. 19: 23, 24). But Jesus did not refer to the eye of a sewing needle. They tell us there were walls surrounding Jerusalem. In fact all the cities in those days were walled in, and most of their supplies were carried on camel-back.

The camel driver knew the hour was getting late. He was approaching the city and feared the gates would be closed by the time he arrived. He spurred his weary camels on as much as he could. Just as he was rounding the last curve he saw the gates close. Now he was in a dilemma. It was unsafe for the late camel driver to lodge outside the city walls lest he be robbed by armed bandits. But a provision had been made for such a situation. For his safety, small gates called the "needle's eye" had been set in the city walls. To negotiate these gates and the small passage through the wall the camel must be unladen, his load of freight carried through the gates, and the camel must get down on his knees and crawl through. Jesus used a fitting simile. It impresses the lesson that we must get rid of our load of pride and self-importance, get a humble mind. If the young man had said, All right, Lord, I will change my affections, and bring my all under the yoke; I will be faithful in that which is another man's, he might have filled a vastly different place in God's scheme of things. All that we have is God's in the sense that it is only loaned to us, and He will one day call His servants to account for the way we use it. But this young man refused to take off the load of his own ways and obey; he was not little in his own estimation, he refused to humble himself.

When His disciples heard it, "they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?" But Jesus answered them, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." It is possible for a rich man if he trusts not in his riches—like Abraham of old—to be saved. Abraham had wealth, but he used it faithfully. So it is possible to be faithful in the possession of riches, in that which is another man's, but there is a greater temptation to be unfaithful. The Christian's ideal is: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; . . . lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Prov. 30: 8, 9). Financially the center-of-the-road condition is preferable to either extreme. Poverty has its dangers, and riches its temptations.

Today

The hours of rest are over,
The hours of toil begin;
The stars above have faded,
The moon has ceased to shine.
The earth puts on her beauty
Beneath the sun's red ray;
And I must rise to labor.
What is my work today?

To search for truth and wisdom,
To live for Christ alone,
To run my race unburdened,
The goal my Saviour's throne;
To view by faith the promise,
While earthly hopes decay;
To serve the Lord with gladness—
This is my work today.

To shun the world's allurements,
To bear my cross therein,
To turn from all temptation,
To conquer every sin;
To linger, calm and patient,
Where duty bids me stay,
To go where God may lead me—
This is my work today.

To keep my troth unshaken,
Though others may deceive;
To give with willing pleasure,
Or still with joy receive;
To bring the mourner comfort,
To wipe sad tears away;
To help the timid doubter—
This is my work today.

To bear another's weakness,
To soothe another's pain;
To cheer the heart repentant,
And to forgive again;
To commune with the thoughtful,
To guide the young and gay;
To profit all in season—
This is my work today.

I think not of tomorrow,
Its trial or its task;
But still, with childlike spirit,
For present mercies ask.
With each returning morning
I cast old things away;
Life's journey lies before me;
My prayer is for today.

If we do not take God into our plans today, He will not take us into His plans for God's Tomorrow.

For right is right, since God is God, And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty, To falter would be sin.

Our Record of Prophecy

OBSERVING the record of prophecies and their fulfillment is especially wholesome. This is in fact the thing that gives us faith in these days. So many predictions have come to pass that we know certainly that the rest will follow. You know, it is apt to grow commonplace with us but prophecy is the unique attribute that proves there is a God in Heaven. Prophecy demands an intelligence supreme and all-inclusive. Its fulfillment commands the respect of every instructed one for it is an accomplishment that no mortal can claim. It simply cannot be done by man.

Foreknowledge of the great prophetic events of Bible history and seeing their fulfillment must have given the faithful of old a grand assurance that they were dealing with a God who could and would fulfill His promises. Take for instance, the flood: Could we imagine that Noah and his family would come out of that experience with any ordinary impression? Or that the faith of Lot and Abraham was not greatly strengthened when they saw that Sodom was destroyed as declared by the Word of the Lord? We, too, can feel something of the same conviction after all these centuries when we learn from geology and history that these events did occur.

Unquestionably the most important prophecies pertaining to ancient times were those relating to Christ. No doubt it was the fondest hope in the hearts of all God's people to see the fulfillment of the birth of the Messiah. They had the promises in the prophecies of Isaiah and could know in advance how He was to be born. It seems that it would have been wonderful to have lived in those days; yet we have a great advantage in viewing it from our distance. They were too close to appreciate fully or to know the great impact that the life of Christ was to exert on mankind. However, it was a wonderful fulfillment for which they waited and watched, as we now hope and pray for the second appearing of the Master. There is much to give us faith in the Word of God. What we need to do is to look at the evidence.

A noted man once said, "Not many people actually feel contented and happy for more than a few moments at a time. With most people, the happy moments are interspersed with a pendulum-like swing into gloom and misery." That is because they pursue things which lead to temporary enjoyment rather than the lasting pleasures which God has promised.

In this respect we compare well with a radio. Our happiness depends largely upon our selectivity. If we determine each day to tune in only love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance, we will soon learn to turn the dial of our thoughts against hatred, selfishness and jealousy.

The marvelous human radio is so delicately adjusted that the entire body is sensitive to and is modified by each thought. About us are both the elements of godliness and worldliness, appealing for our reception. While listening to one program we are excluding the other. We may tune in on the program of godliness and not allow the clearness of our reception to be interrupted by selfishness, hatred, jealousy or foolishness.

When Temptation Assails

IT IS EXTREMELY important that we learn all we can about how to recognize temptation and what we must do to resist it at all times.

First, let us remember that temptation is something that we cannot escape, try as hard as we can. It misses no individual, skips no race or color; it is as old as human history, and as universal as human nature. It is sure to come, and when it does come, a critical hour has struck for us. It is then that everything depends on, not what the tempter does, but what the tempted does. The recording angel waits with uplifted pen to put on record what we think, what we say and what we do as we stand face to face with temptation. The fight is on, and the question is: Are we going to get the better of temptation, or is temptation going to get the better of us? It all remains with us which way it will be.

One of the most important means of defense is a recognition of the reality of temptation, and of the permanent injury that it can inflict on our souls. And with this recognition of the power and danger of temptation should go also the acceptance of the fact that temptation can be resisted. If we do not believe this, with all our heart, we are beaten before we start. We must convince ourselves that we can be stronger than the temptation if we really want to be.

Too many times we fear that when some temptation assails us, we shall go down before it, but this is not necessary, for God has promised that He will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. When we fully realize this, when we say to ourselves, "It can be done; this temptation can be resisted and conquered," the battle is more than half won.

Another method of defense is to avoid unduly exposing ourselves to temptation. Never hunt temptation; it will hunt you. Christ prayed for His disciples that they might watch and pray lest they should enter into temptation. He knew it was absolutely necessary for their salvation that they keep themselves as far from the evil as possible.

I once heard from the lips of a wise spiritual teacher, words to this effect: "We should pray as did Jesus to be kept from temptation; but after praying thus, do not deliberately walk right into it. Keep as far away from the precipice as you can, and never see how close you can get without going over." If we keep this thought in mind, it may help us to avoid many an unnecessary conflict with sin.

Another important defense against temptation is to make immediate war upon it when it manifests itself. We have heard about the German "Blitzkrieg," or lightning war in World War II, with which they demolished Poland, and with which they threatened to demolish other countries. Of course, we know that no nation is justified in God's sight when dealing with their neighbors in such a manner, but it is the only sensible way to fight temptation. Make it a "Blitzkrieg," a lightning war; "resist the devil, and he will flee from you." To debate with temptation, to parley with it, is to give it a great advantage in the battle we have to fight.

I believe one of the most important means of defense

is to prepare in advance for the coming of temptation. This means we must build up a strong resistance to evil by filling our minds with the Word of God, letting it rule us under all circumstances, and by keeping in close touch with our Maker. We learn from the Divine Record that Jesus kept in close touch with His Father through prayer. And if Jesus considered prayer an important defense against temptation, we need not think that we can successfully ward off every evil impulse without it.

Jesus knew He needed help from a higher source that He might have the strength to withstand the enemy and become a victor in the conflict. We, too, need that same divine assistance. Therefore it becomes necessary for us to watch lest we neglect prayer. It was Christ's victory over temptation that fitted and qualified Him to be the future King of all the earth; and our victory, too, will lead us on to higher, grander and nobler things.

Jesus is the perfect Pattern for us to follow; and as He kept close to God, let us keep close to Him. "Temptations lose their power when Thou art nigh," are the words of an old hymn. Let us remember that from day to day; for if we do, our battle with self will be made easier.

Let us so labor that God will see fit to grant us that great victory of which Paul spake when he said, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." May we live in such close and loving relationship to our great Example that we can say, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."



It takes watchfulness and courageous effort to keep the eye single and to be a man. It also takes a large dose of the "one medicine" which a white-haired physician considered the greatest boon to mankind. When asked by a young interne which medicine he considered the greatest boon, the old doctor looked back thoughtfully over a half century of practice. He could remember critical moments when one medicine which saved a life seemed the most important in the world. In another crisis, a carload of the same thing might be useless. It was like asking him which kind of weather he regarded as best for making professional calls. He had suffered in hot summers, been half-frozen in cold winters.

As memories crowded in upon him, they brought a sharp, clear recognition of the one medicine which he believed to be the master medicine of all. To the interne he said: "The most wonderful medicine is not compounded of rare and expensive drugs; it is one of the most commonplace things I know. In fact, it is not a drug at all. You can spell the name of this master medicine with four simple letters, W-O-R-K."

Let us think of others more and more, and remove that selfish spirit.

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Our conduct toward others is a very important point in self-development, and for this purpose the well-known Golden Rule is provided: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you. . ."

The Virtue of Humility

WE SHOULD NEVER be ashamed of humility. In this great world, with all the majesty of nature around us, the wisest may well be humble. A man may boast of his knowledge, but it is as a grain of sand on the seashore compared with what he does not know. A man may boast of his riches, but it is poverty compared with the wealth of the world; and riches cannot deliver from the power of the grave. A man may boast of his talents, but he is helpless when crippling disease strikes to thwart his ambition. The wisest, the richest, the cleverest, have need of great humility.

It is good to know whatever worthwhile there is to know, but we need not parade it. The fact is, that those who are wisest, even in this world's wisdom are much more humble than those who possess but a partial amount of the established knowledge. No doubt you are acquainted with people who know so little, yet talk so much, even boastfully. Perhaps—perhaps we have been in that class ourselves sometimes.

Two hundred and fifty years ago there lived an Englishman named Isaac Newton. No man in England knew more than he. He did a marvelous work, made astounding discoveries, and all the world is richer because Sir Isaac Newton lived. Yet at the close of his life he declared that he felt as if he had been picking up a few pebbles on the seashore while the vast ocean of truth lay unexplored round about him. He had filled the world with wonder and set up a kingdom of knowledge, but he was humble to acknowledge how little it was compared with what he did not know.

We should never cease cultivating this noble virtue. It will help us all through life, and it is essential in order to merit the Master's approval. However, let us not mistake humility for a weak and timid, self-despising spirit. There is such a thing as honest pride, and self-respect. In all our dealings a right estimate of ourselves, as God sees us, is the characteristic that we should strive to attain. We may not know everything but we may know the truth of God's Word and what His will is for us. We need not be rich to be generous nor have all wisdom to be understanding. Our influence may not be great, but it can be good. Our speech may not be eloquent but it can be truthful and sincere. We cannot all have good looks, but we can have a good conscience and having that, we shall have peace of mind and our hope will be a joy to us.

We should be aware that humility is a virtue that is much easier to preach than to practice. The master thinks it is good doctrine for the servant; the laity think it good for the clergy; and the clergy for the laity. But let us learn to apply it to *ourselves*. That is where it is needed the most, and we are the ones who shall benefit from its practice.

The truly humble Christian will manifest this noble virtue in his daily life. He will as quickly denounce wrong in himself as in others. He will stand for the right firmly where firmness is necessary. He will remember to be humble not only when he is brought low but also when he is praised, and this is a great and rare attainment. It will be well to remember that if we fail to learn this lesson of humility, we have learned nothing.

The Christian's Bow of Promise

WE ARE PROMISED a life that will last for billions of years and then unceasingly repeat itself; we need not say trillions or quadrillions, because even ten thousand years is beyond our conception, to say nothing of billions. Along with that we are told that it is a life so different from anything we have ever seen that it has never entered the heart of man. Try to imagine the most beautiful place that exists or could exist on earth; imagine yourself to be in the prime of life with a perfect physique and the best of health, with no worry and the assurance that your life would never be tapered toward death but would always be broadening and growing in fullness and joy. Then heap on riches, power over the elements and power to obtain the desires of your heart. Then add the ability to mount up as eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint (Isa. 40:31)—a wonderful thing in itself. Add the honor that only God can give, the esteem of your fellowmen and love of Christ, and you have not even then been able to gather even a faint idea of what our Lord has promised to them that love Him by obeying His commandments.

Some of the wonderful beings that we meet will be hundreds of millions of billions of years old, will have known what it is to live in God's great wonderful worlds on high that were once like our earth, but now are shining in splendor and glorious light. Our own Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, will be nearly 2000 years old when He appears to His little flock to show them salvation and to subdue the forces of evil that keep our earth in darkness. He will be able to show us knowledge faster than we can receive it. He will know how to make the desolate regions to spring forth with gladness, and will turn mountainous regions into a fertile plain. He will know how to keep the earth in perfect health ("The inhabitant shall not say I am sick"—Isa. 33:24) and peace ("Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"—Isa. 2:4).

* * * * *

A "Hundred-Point" man is one who is true to every trust; who keeps his word; who is loyal to his God. He does not abuse by word or act, nor neglect to do a kind deed for others. He keeps his tongue restrained with the bridle of truth; is polite, considerate and moderate at all times; willing to learn from God; is very courageous.

"Hundred-Point" men are safe men to deal with, the kind of men that God likes to deal with. They are "workers together" with God. They do unto others as though they were the others. In fact they are "new men," made over new, "created in righteousness and true holiness."

Many times we desire to walk in the way that leads to life and at the same time we want to please self and do as seems right in our own eyes. That is being double-minded, and James tells us that "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways," and that he shall receive nothing eternal from the Lord.

* * * * *

There is more bitterness following upon sin's ending than ever there was sweetness flowing from sin's acting.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (cont.)

(Continued from page 11)

full of life and so lately shining with the brightest colors, should wrap itself in its dark and seemingly inanimate covering; but that covering preserves it. It was thus with the truth. If the interested and suspicious policy of Rome, in the days of her power, had met with the naked truth, she would have destroyed it, or at least endeavored to do so. Disguised as it was by the divines of that period under endless subtleties and distinctions, the Popes did not recognize it, or else perceived that while in that state it could not trouble them. They took under their protection both the artisans and their handiwork. But the spring might come, when the hidden truth might lift its head and throw off all the threads which covered it. Having acquired fresh vigor in its seeming tomb, the world might behold it in the days of its resurrection, obtain the victory over Rome and all her errors."

In the language of the historian, spring would cause the insect to emerge from the chrysalis, or, according to the allegory, the whale vomited out Jonah. This stupendous event came only as a climax to long and persistent wrestling and travail within the belly of the whale, of weary nights of study and prayer to God as Jonah struggled to be freed from the weeds of superstition. We read,

"I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

"The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple" (Jonah 2: 2, 4, 5, 7).

Here the other definition of Jonah applies. This is not the unfaithful class who fled away from their duty, but the faithful Jonah, who set his face again toward the holy temple.

The mother of L. T. Nichols told how he, when but a boy, always wanted to hear the Bible read. She was a religious woman, although her religion was the Romish fables inherited by Protestantism. He would often reason and argue with her, saying, "Why, mother, we were never condemned because Adam sinned. It would not be just for God to condemn us because of another man's sin." His school teacher, who later became one of his loyal followers, heard him speak at a religious meeting when he was only fifteen years old. He opposed the false doctrines, and said, "They are not reasonable. It is not reasonable to believe in eternal torment; not reasonable to believe in a literal devil." He was searching for light, and wherever he went he caused the old "fish" trouble.

He would say, "Mother, it says there in Matt. 5: 5, 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' They have been telling us we go off to heaven, but the Bible does not say that. The Bible says, 'We shall reign on the earth.' " At the age of thirteen years he would take his Bible to school, and during recess try to interest his classmates in what it taught. Slowly but surely he was casting aside the weeds of darkness, error and superstition that had been wrapped about his head.

The most vital question in a religion whose highest goal is salvation must always be, "What must I do to be saved?" When in 1880 the Rev. L. T. Nichols recognized the Scriptural demand for moral perfection and pro-

claimed to his followers that no man could be saved apart from knowing and keeping every commandment of God, this brought final cleavage with every established church. In the language of the faithful Jonah, he said,

"I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed.

"And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land" (Jonah 2: 9, 10)—a "dry and thirsty land," devoid of the water of life (Ps. 63: 1; John 4: 14).

"And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3: 1—4).

When after the Apostasy the command of the Lord was repeated to arise and go to Nineveh, there was a faithful Jonah to respond, to sound the warning: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Nineveh, this world-wide Babylon, this universal city of confusion, this Sodom of moral depravity, is doomed to destruction in the forty years (typified as "forty days") of judgments which shall follow Christ's return to earth (Mic. 7: 15; Acts 7: 36). The only means of deliverance is to flee out of Babylon for forsaking her errors.

Day by day, O Master, make us,
With that blessed life of Thine.
Day by day, O Lord, enfold us
With Thy mighty grace divine.
Day by day, O Savior, take us
For Thy servants, willing, free.
Day by day, O Master, make us
All that Thou wouldst have us be.
Day by day, O Savior, keep us
Just abiding in Thy love,
Simple trusting and obeying,
Looking unto Thee above.
Day by day, O Savior, give us
Of Thy strength we need so much,
And with Thee and Thy blest Spirit,
Ever keep us, Lord, in touch.
Help us, Lord, to leave the future
Safe within Thy hands for aye,
Trusting Thee, Lord, to renew us,
Living simply day by day.

Dear God, You are the Doctor. . . who regulates my heart. . . I need Your tender guidance. . . each time I make a start. . . Your Word is magic medicine. . . a soothing, healing balm. . . capable of making. . . my troubled heart be calm. . . With You I gather faith and strength. . . to labor day by day. . . beside You, even rocky roads. . . become a smoother way. . . When illness comes to test me. . . You ease the sharpest pain. . . and I can find the sunshine. . . though standing in the rain. . . My God stay with me always. . . in sickness and in health. . . so long as You will comfort me. . . mine is the greatest wealth. . . Divine Physician, hear my prayer. . . lead me to the right. . . so that I can ever be. . . shedding abroad Thy light.

Meditations

On the Word

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21: 36).

This verse forms the conclusion of one of the most remarkable sermons preached by Jesus. No other recorded discourse is so directly and exclusively prophetic, and it is of special interest to us because one of the periods referred to happens to be the one in which we are living at this moment. There are three distinct subjects: First, the persecutions which were to test the infant Church (vs. 12—19); second, the destruction of Jerusalem and dispersion of the Jewish nation (20: 24); and third, the "time of trouble" immediately preceding the second advent of the Messiah.

There is also, at the beginning, a warning against deception by impostors, natural phenomena, and the ordinary movements of nations. This is necessary, for in each generation there are those who seize upon every departure from normal in nature or politics, from a backward season to an unfavorable election or an epidemic of disease, as a sign of the imminent "end of the world." Many people have gone so far as to set a definite date for the Lord's appearance, and the resultant fiascos have brought the whole millenarian doctrine into disrepute with the public, so that today it is associated with fanatics and mental defectives. But as the existence of the counterfeit implies and admits the existence of the genuine, so in spite of these deceptions the end of the present order will come at the appointed time; and had the warning of Jesus been heeded, this glorious, hope-inspiring doctrine would not have been degraded and obscured by association with earthquakes, windstorms, floods, insect plagues, meteoric showers, small wars, and the like.

The real signs of Christ's coming are so numerous and so positive that no one need mistake them. The tremendous increase of wickedness and lawlessness (II Tim. 3: 1—4), the lowered or non-existent moral standards (Luke 17: 26—30), the growing friction between capital and labor (James 5: 1—8), the somewhat forlorn cry of "Peace and safety" (I Thess. 5: 1—3) while converting the world's resources to warlike uses (Joel 3: 9—11), the projected association of nations to maintain peace (Isa. 8: 9—12)—all these are true portents of the dawn. The end is a fixed point; it does not recede: and while we know not the day or hour, we know that the gap is fast narrowing, and soon, for better or for worse, our time will be gone.

"And there shall be signs in the [political] sun, and in the moon, and in the stars," said the Teacher, when speaking of the tribulation of the last days, "and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring."

This figure of speech is too plain to require explanation. The rushing of the nations (Isa. 17: 13) is well likened to the wild, destructive, purposeless roaring of a stormy sea.

"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21: 26—28).

To the believers who are *doing*, the approach of the Day of the Lord will be the dawn or a Morrow of prosperity and happiness, a day of release and redemption, whereas to the scoffing world, at least to the intransigent majority (Zech. 13: 8), it will mean only destruction.

A solemn warning is sounded in verse 34: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."

Our minds are so small, our vision so circumscribed, that in the midst of all these wonders, in the climax and consummation of all human history, in an age pregnant with great and significant events, we still go to sleep. What shall we eat, what shall we drink? wherewithal shall we be clothed? How shall we find recreation? these things can and too often do monopolize our consciousness so that our eyes are closed to the faith-strengthening things happening all about us, our ears deaf to the warning bells heralding the coming of our great High Priest.

The antidote for and safeguard against this sleepy condition is watchfulness. How often we are counselled, as in our text, to *watch*. To be an efficient watchman, we must get into a proper position, that is, upon the watch-tower of Truth (Prov. 18: 10, Hab. 2: 1). "Watch-tower," in the Hebrew, signifies "a high, elevated place, from whence one can see far and near." The symbolism is obvious. Standing on the higher level, our vision is no longer confined to the present with its little problems; we can visualize the Plan as a whole, the workings of God in the past, the fulfillment of His prophetic words in our own time, and His promises for the future, stretching even into Eternity.

From this vantage point we can also observe and anticipate the movements of the enemy, for the word of God, being a "thorough furnisher unto all good works," reveals what is in man by nature (Mark 7: 21, 22), and also what to do about it. The "tower" is more than a lookout, it is a fortress in which we may find shelter when our power is gone and "the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall" (Isa. 25: 4). This tempest is surely coming, a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation (Dan. 12: 1), when the mighty army of the Lord's unfaithful servants, those "terrible ones," will go forth to destroy utterly the last vestiges of human misrule. Whether we believe or doubt, whether we watch or sleep, ready or not, that storm will come, and how thankful we shall be then for the shelter of this strong tower.

If our watching has been diligent, our prayers fervent, sincere and according to His will, and our works perfect before God, we shall be worthy to escape these things which shall come to pass, and in safety and assurance of eternal life to stand unashamed and without fear before the Son of man.

Questions and Answers



Please explain A. D. 70, I don't find it in the Bible.

The date year A. D. 70 does not occur in the text of the Bible, however marginal reference Bibles frequently indicate the probable dates of the occurrences recorded in the various chapters. It is historically certain that the city of Jerusalem was destroyed in the year A. D. 70, which would have been approximately 37 years after Jesus foretold its destruction as recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 17. It was a fulfillment of the prophecy of the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel, chapter 9: 27, and 12: 11.

Was it a literal fish that swallowed Jonah?

Jonah is one of the deepest and perhaps least understood books of the Bible. Here the author narrates in the form of an allegory the great calamity which befell the Church as a result of defying God's commands; this, followed by a period of dormancy for true religion; then, penitence and restoration to God's favor by compliance with His law. The narrative begins:

"Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."

Nineveh, in prophecy, signifies the same as Babylon: "confusion, darkness, the forces of evil, world of the ungodly." Always God's spokesmen must cry against the prevailing wickedness; they must lift their voice in condemnation of error, as Moses before Pharaoh, Daniel before Belshazzar, Paul before Agrippa. This, Jonah was reluctant to do. Let us not confuse Jonah with a single individual. In this allegory he represents a class of people, the Church, first true, then false, with which the definitions of "Jonah" correspond: "Son of truth, my dove, my undefiled, the bride of Christ" as in Song of Sol. 6: 9; also there is an unfaithful Jonah who is "excluded from the holy convocation." It is this latter, unfaithful Jonah who was retrograding from truth to error that we see pictured in the first of the book. He was commanded to go to Nineveh to testify against it, but instead he determined to go to Tarshish. This is significant. As the literal Tarshish was at the westernmost point of the then-known world, and farthest removed from Nineveh in the east, so the apostate Christians fled away as far as possible from their duty to God.

Jonah is represented as boarding a ship bound for Tarshish, but his destination was never reached due to a severe tempest which arose upon the sea. Among the definitions of "tempest" given by the lexicographer are the following: "To be violently shaken, tossed by adversity; used of an enemy who rushes upon his victims like a storm; to be dispersed as chaff; to scatter a people." Like the other terms in the allegory, neither the sea nor the tempest is literal, but rather a mighty conflict arose upon the sea of nations (Rev. 17: 15) with the papal determination either to destroy the true Christians or compel them to modify their beliefs and practices.

We read further concerning the apostate Christians:

"Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep" (Jonah 1: 5).

This is the same sleep or spiritual insensibility which Jesus indicates in Matt. 25: 5: "While the bridegroom

tarried, they all slumbered and slept."

When God's people tired of the rigid demands of His law and fell into a state of slumber, then the dormant law of truth was left to the will of the apostate fathers, whose decision was to dispense entirely with it, or, in the language of the allegory, cast Jonah overboard as the cause of the storm.

"So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging" (Jonah 1: 15).

When the truth was cast out and rejected, the forces of the Apostasy (freed from the living rebuke of a people striving toward perfection in doctrine and practice) could breathe more easily. A great calm prevailed where storms had been: the opposition was overcome—gone to the depths of the sea. Then the Lord provided another form of protection, for beyond that era truth was destined to live again in the hearts of men.

"The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (Jonah 1: 17).

Definitions of the word "fish" are, "to cover over, hence to make dark." And in the darkness of the fish's belly, Jonah, the truth, lay wrapped in midnight darkness, the "weeds" of superstition and ignorance wrapped around his head, the intellect completely enslaved (Jonah 2: 5).

During the ministry of Jesus He referred to this "fish" as a "whale" (Matt. 12: 40). This whale, or sea monster, is the same power described in Ezekiel 29: 3; 32: 2.

"Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself."

"Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troublest the waters with thy feet, and foulest their rivers."

This whale has feet, and hence cannot be literal, but is the "king of Egypt,"—spiritual Egypt (Rev. 11: 8)—ruler of the darkness of this world (Eph. 6: 12). The Almighty, looking toward the future, provided for the preservation of His Word. As Jonah of the allegory was miraculously saved from the sea by a beast which bore him no good-will, so the Bible was miraculously preserved by its enemies, who seemed to have it at their mercy. When the apostate Christians rejected the truth, the papal power, by divine manipulation, served as custodian and protector of the Word. This strange phenomenon of history is aptly described by the historian D'Aubigne:

"Truth, that it might pass safe through the period when Rome would have crushed it with her iron scepter, had acted like the insect that weaves with its threads the chrysalis in which it envelopes itself during the winter. And, strange to say, the means that had served in this way to preserve the truth were the scholastic divines so much decried. These ingenious artisans of thought had strung together all the current theological notions, and of these threads they had formed a net, under which it would have been difficult for more skillful persons than their contemporaries to recognize the truth in its first purity. We may regret that the insect,

(Continued on page 9)

Just the Same Today

When Moses and his soldiers
From Egypt's land did flee,
Their enemies behind them,
And in front of them the sea,
God raised the waters like a wall,
And opened up their way,
And the God that lived in Moses' time
Is just the same today.

When David and Goliath met,
The wrong against the right,
The giant armed with human power,
And David with God's might,
God's power with David's sling and stone
The giant low did lay,
And the God that lived in David's time
Is just the same today.

When Daniel, faithful to his God,
Would not bow down to man,
And by God's enemies was brought
Before them and condemned,
God shielded him from harm, we read,
They had no power to slay;
And the God that lived in Daniel's time
Is just the same today.

When Jesus came, the Lord of Life,
To save us from our sins,
He fought against temptations,
The victory first to win.
The Tempter did his best against
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
And the Lord who conquered evil then
Is just the same today.

When Jesus in the wilderness
Those hungry people fed,
He multiplied the fishes,
He multiplied the bread:
For daily bread and all our needs
He teaches us to pray;
And the Lord who fed those people then
Is just the same today.

When Peter feared that he would sink
Beneath the troubled wave,
The Master's hand caught hold of him,
For Christ had power to save.
And the One whose arm was strong to help
Can be your strength and stay,
For the One who lived in Peter's time
Is just the same today.

When sinners to the Savior came,
The weary ones found rest;
He pardoned and He healed them all,
Each one who came was blest.
Oh, turn from each besetting sin,
Do it without delay!
For the One who offered mercy then
Is just the same today.

And when He left this world of ours
He said He'd come again,
To take His own to be with Him,
With Him on earth to reign,
He's coming soon to take us home,
The King is on His way,
For the One who promised He would come
Is just the same today.

And so our God revealed in Christ
As Father, Savior, Friend,
Was in the past unchangeable,
And will be to the end.
We trust Him now and follow Him,
Neath Truth's unclouded ray,
For the God of whom the Bible speaks
Is just the same today.



